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Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm always glad to have the opportunity to say a few words to corpsmen who have been assigned to an installation run by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior. I would like to extend greetings from the Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, who has a special interest in you young men, and in what you can do for your country now, and in later years.

In a message to Corpsmen, Secretary Udall said that when you work to correct soil erosion, do a little landscaping, or seeding, or clean up a stream, or plant a tree, you are helping to scrub the face of America the beautiful. And in future years, Americans yet to be born will thank you.

A few weeks ago I attended dedication ceremonies at another Job Corps Center at Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. I had with me a carefully written speech which I hoped would inspire the corpsmen and the local citizens. But before I spoke, a young corpsman named Mike Sundberg, spoke on behalf of his fellow volunteers. After listening to him, I stuffed my speech back in my pocket, because he did a far better job than I could have done. The brief talk he gave was the real dedication speech at that Center, and I'd like to recall some of the things he said.

Mike said that when he first came to the Center he found it hard to adjust to regimentation, to being told what to do. He wasn't interested in anything except dreaming of being back on a certain street corner in San Francisco. Every time he heard the song "San Francisco" on the radio or on a jukebox his longing for his old gang and that street corner got worse.

This went on for a couple of weeks, and one night, sitting alone on his bunk, dreaming of San Francisco, Mike asked himself what that street corner had to offer him. He couldn't find a very good answer, even though he still felt he needed that street corner.

Mike told us how he had loafed away many hours on that street corner, pretending to feel that fellows who stayed in school were "squares." He confessed, though, that sometimes he wondered what would happen to him as he got older.

Mike told how, as he sat on his bunk, these thoughts were going through his mind. What really did the street corner have to offer?

He had been in the Job Corps only a few weeks, but already he saw that his limited education and his lack of any skill were his biggest enemies. The street corner became a little less important. It wasn't necessarily his enemy, but it wasn't his friend, either. It was just a place...a place that could be torn down and changed by a bulldozer in a matter of minutes.

Mike then told us that he realized something had happened to him in those first few weeks at the center...He realized that this assignment to a job corps center might be the last chance he would have to set a course for himself. Not a change in course, because Mike realized that he had never been on a course...he, like many others had been drifting with nowhere to go, along with others like himself, who also had nowhere to go.

Mike told us that then and there he decided it would be much better to get what he could out of any training being offered him...he decided he'd make himself interested in what he was doing...he'd do his level best to understand that any man who works for alliving has a certain amount of regimentation, a certain amount of being told what to do, and when to do it.

I know it sounds like a story I've made up. But it isn't. In a few days things began to change for Mike. Right now, he's one of the outstanding corpsmen at Malheur, respected by his fellow workers, and well liked by his supervisors.

I learned a great deal from Mike's talk. I learned that my prepared speech couldn't compare to what he said right from his heart. It gave me new hope for all young men who, through no fault of their own had been given no chance to develop their inherent desire to amount to something.

Mike may not have realized it, but what happened to him while sitting on his bunk that night, was that the spark of DESIRE was fanned. You know what the word desire means, but have you thought of it as the driving force that brings success despite the odds?

In every endeavor, it's the man with desire and drive that moves ahead. In football, Notre Dame coach Ara Parseghian listed it as one of the main reasons for the great season the Irish had after several losing years. The coach said: "We were a dedicated football team, willing to pay the price to win."

It's this desire, this drive, that shows when you see the little guy on a football team outshine the bigger players. Coach Parseghian is not alone when he says DESIRE is the one thing he wants his football players to have. If they have it, they can be taught the rest.

This is what your government, from President Johnson on down, wants to see you acquire, if you don't have it now. The spark is there, or you wouldn't have volunteered for the Job Corps. The men chosen to operate this center want to see the spark brighten. They want to help you all help yourselves. You have the opportunity...nobody but yourself can stop you.

Try to remember the talk Mike gave when you think about that street corner you remember so well...ask yourself, what can the street corner offer you? In the Job Corps you can start rebuilding your life because it does have something to offer. We all know it's not easy, but nothing worthwhile is. It's your life...give it everything you've got, then like a real pro, give it a little extra. You'll never regret it.

Thank you very much.